

Election Violence and the Issue of Political Instability in Nigeria (1999-2015)

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Abstract: Democracy cannot be sustained without free and fair periodic election process that could be an only means of getting true legitimate government elected by the votes of majority. Election violence has become source of producing illegitimate leaders that are not the real choice of the majority voters. This paper has examines electoral violence in Nigeria from 1999-20015, covering five events of periodic elections. The methodology used in this study has reviewed relevant literatures from secondary source of data, taken Nigerian States as an area of study. The researcher has adopted Conflict Theory as a framework to guide this research work and argues that politicians who are in position of power and wanted to retain it or those that want to captures power by all means employed the services of violent youth gangs, security formations, associate politicians and electoral body staffs to manipulate the election results which has led to violence either before, during and after election in various states in Nigeria. The study would recommended that to avoid election violence in Nigeria, politicians and all the other relevant stakeholders must adhered to the provision of rule of law in the entire country electoral processes at various stages of election activities in the country, which must demonstrate fairness, equity , transparency and accountability in the entire election process.

Keywords: Election, violence, politicians, fairness.

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Introduction

Nigeria like many other African states has a record of conflicts and violence before, after and during election process. The cause of these conflicts or violence could be traced to primordial factors associated with selfish interest of political contenders to retain or seek electoral post, ethnic, religious bigotry, and structural imbalance of its federalism system, bad governance, political intolerance and electoral malpractice. (Egobueze, 2013). Nigeria can be rightly described as one of the most deeply divided states in Africa. From its inception as a colonial state, Nigeria has faced a perennial crisis of territorial or state legitimacy, which has often challenged its efforts at national cohesion, democratization, stability and economic transformation. The politicians in Nigeria have over the years

‘become more desperate and daring in taking and retaining power and also more reckless and greed in their use and abuse of power as well as more intolerant of opposition, criticism and crippling any effort that would replace them even if they underperforming below the expectation of the peoples voted them in power’ (Alemika, 2015).

These conflicts or violence are created and originated by political elites and their allies, have been for selfish actualization of primitive accumulation anchored on regional sentimentalism, ethnic chauvinism, religious bigotry, economic materialism, political domination of the State, to achieve their inordinate interest, these politicians manipulate the youth to accepting them as the corner stone for their survival in the State. They arm these youths with dangerous weapons to prosecute the elections in their favour. Those already in government use the men of the Nigeria Police to chase their opponent and protect them in order to use the youths to unleash mayhem against their perceived enemies. These youths are hardly arrested nor detained for the havoc they may have caused. The youths therefore, are at the heart of most violent conflicts in the country. A recent study suggests that the youths are prosecutors of 90-95% of violent conflicts in Nigeria (Ogbeide, 2007). Commenting on the forgoing, Human Rights Watch, noted: ‘Many of Nigeria’s ostensibly elected leaders obtained their positions by demonstrating an ability to use corruption and political violence to prevail in sham elections. In violent and brazenly rigged polls, government officials have denied millions of Nigerians any real voice in selecting their political leaders. In place of democratic competition struggles for political office have often been waged violently in the streets by gangs of thugs- youths-recruited by politicians to help them seize control of power’ .(Alemika, 2015).

The critical question that comes to mind at this juncture is ‘what role has the State played in either averting or encouraging the high incidence of electoral violence within the past nineteen years in Nigeria?’ Through a critical examination of the theoretical causes and factors that lead to electoral violence in Nigerian democratic contexts and from empirical analysis of pre, during and post electoral violence in Fourth Republic of Nigeria (1999, 2003, 2007, 2011 and 2015), this research would try to provide answers to these questions and suggests possible means of addressing this violence so that our political process would produce true leaders can be elected by majority votes of the electorates to operate governance that would be accountable and responsive to the peoples that voted them in to power.

Research Questions

The paper has these questions to ask about the nature of elections violence in Nigeria:

- ✓ What are causative factors that causes election violence in Nigeria since 1999-2015.?
- ✓ Who are perpetrator’s agents of election violence in Nigeria since 1999-2015.?
- ✓ What does policy makers do to control or manage the election violence in Nigeria since 1999-2015.?

Objectives

The paper has the general objective of managing election violence in Nigeria but has a specific objectives as follows:

- ✓ To examine the causative factors responsible for election violence in Nigeria since 1999 to 2015.
- ✓ To find out the perpetrator’s of election violence in Nigeria since 1999-2015.
- ✓ To evaluate the effort of stakeholder in managing or controlling the events of election violence in Nigeria since 1999-2015.

Literature Reviewed /Conceptual Clarification

Democratic Stability

The premise of democratic stability is that what sustains government and ensure stability is voluntary supported or is with the consent of the citizens rather than reliance on coercion. To that extent therefore, there is a correlation between democratic stability and legitimacy (Osaghae, 1997). Democratic stability implies that government is a product of the will of the people and derives its legitimacy from the people's consent. This therefore, ensures that the people willingly support the government given that the government is not arbitrarily foisted on them. In a reciprocal manner, the government carried out programmes that are in line with the interest of the people. In a democratically stable society, democracy is said to be more or less consolidated. To this end the reverse to authoritarianism becomes remote because democracy is seen as the "only game in town. (Linz and Gunther, 1995; Alfa, 2011).

Violence

Violence could be an instrument employed by non-governmental organizations, individuals and groups to press forward their demands. However, violence when it is endemic and persistent or unmanageable may become an impediment to political stability and economic progress. In our conceptualization, electoral violence is synonymously used as political violence, looting, arson, thuggery, kidnapping etc. spontaneous or not, which occur before, during and after every election (Ilufoye, 2006).

Political Violence

According to Anifowose (1982) is the use of or threat of physical act carried out by individual or individuals within a political system against another individual or groups and property, with the intent to cause injury or death to persons, damage or destruction to property, and whose objective, choice of targets or victims, surrounding circumstance, implementation, and effects have political significances, that tends to modify or change the behavior of others in the existing arrangement for the political system Political violence could take two dimensions that are pre-electoral violence and post-electoral violence (Tamuno, 1991). The pre-electoral violence may occur where electoral laws or provisions are seen to favor a particular candidate at the expense of the other. It could also occur when a particular candidate is over-ambitious and perhaps sees the signals that he may likely lose the election to the opponent. Post-electoral violence on the other hand, may be spontaneous. It may be engineered by individuals who feel cheated, alienated or deprived by the unfairness of the electoral process. This deprivation may be real or perceived. In Nigeria, the purpose of such violence apart from seeking redress through illegal means is also to destroy it, if we cannot have it (Afolabi 2007).

History of Electoral Violence in Nigeria

The history of elections in Nigeria dates back 1922 with the introduction of Clifford's Constitution. The first recorded electoral violence in post-colonial Nigeria occurred in 1964. In the Western Region, violent political conflicts, popularly referred to as "operation wet e", were recorded from 1964 to 1965 following both federal and regional elections as well as rift between Awolowo and Akintola. There were also violent conflicts in parts of Northern Region, especially between supporters of the Northern People's Congress (NPC) and supporters of other parties, mainly the Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU) and Action Group Each of the Regional Parties in the election openly intimidated its opponents in the campaigns. When it became clear that the neutrality of the Federal Electoral Commission could not be guaranteed, calls were made for the army to supervise the elections. The UPGA resolved to boycott the elections. The elections were finally held under conditions that were

not free and fair. The Western Region became the “theater of war” between the NNDP and the NPC and the AG-UPGA, The upheavals led to the First Military coup on January 15, 1966. This coup marked the end of the First Republic. Subsequent elections that followed were the 1979 and 1983 which ushered in Alhaji Shehu Shagari as the President in 1979 and 1983 respectively and the Legislators of the Second Republic. Again, the elections were marred by irregularities and corruption, this sparked up series of post-election violence. Since the centre could no longer hold, the Second Republic was therefore overthrown by the General Muhammadu Buhari led Military Junta. Buhari’s government could not savour the political terrain for long because of obnoxious policies and lack of vision for a Transition Programme, thus the Regime was sacked in a Palace Coup led by his Chief of Army Staff, then Major General Ibrahim Badamusi Babangida. With Babangida’s transition programme on course, a general election was organized in 1993. The 1993 elections were believed to be the most free and fair, ever conducted in Nigeria. Chief M.K.O. Abiola of the Social Democratic Party was assumed to have won the election. The annulment of the election by the Military Junta was greeted with stiff opposition and thus led to political unrest. As part of the post-election violence, Chief Abiola declared himself President. This action further exacerbated the tension and increased instability in Nigeria till the demise of Chief MKO Abiola and the then Head of State, General Sani Abacha that sacked the Interim Government headed by Chief Shonekan. General Abdulsalami Abubakar took over the saddle and returned the Nation to the 4th Republic on 29th May, 1999 with Chief Olusegun Obasanjo as the President of the Federal Republic and Commander in chief of the Armed Forces of Nigeria. President Obasanjo ruled for eight years. His government organized the 2003 election which was marred by irregularities and conflict in almost every State of the Federation. He handed over to President Umaru Ya’Adua who openly condemned the election that brought him into power, describing it as flawed. Umaru Ya’Adua died and was replaced by his Vice, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan. President Jonathan organized the 2015 General Election which also like the previous election was violence ridden.

Electoral Violence in Nigeria’s 4th Republic, 1999 –2015

Nigerians were dissatisfied with the annulment of June 12 Presidential election. Vociferous groups emerged, pressing on the Military to return the Country to democracy. Faced with this pressure, General Babangida formed an Interim National Government (ING) headed by Chief Earnest Shonekan, The ING was overthrown by General Sani Abacha. With the death of General Abacha on June 8, 1998, General Abdulsalami Abubakar instituted a Transition Programme with the view of returning the State to civil rule in 1999. Beside other programmes, the Regime set up an Electoral Body known as the Independent National Electoral Commission. The inauguration of this Body crystallized the beginning of the journey to Nigeria’s 4th Republic. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) set the rules and time-table for the commencement of political activism, thus, Political Parties were registered and only three Parties, namely: Alliance for Democracy (AD), All Peoples Party (APP) and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) scaled through the huddle and were registered [11,12].

The results of the 1999 general elections indicated that the People’s Democratic Party (PDP), which fielded Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, winning in 21 States across the country was returned elected. The All Peoples Party (APP) came second with 9 states, while the Alliance for Democracy (AD), which held sway in the South-west, had 6 states. As akin to other elections, there were irregularities, but not as pronounced as other experiments. Another general election was conducted in 2003 by President Obasanjo’s Regime, and President Obasanjo was returned again returned to power for the second time in an election that was so

badly flawed. That election was described as the “most fraudulent election” in the history of Nigeria. In fact, the election results proved and confirmed that proper National Assembly, Gubernatorial and Presidential elections were not conducted in accordance with the INEC guidelines and the Electoral Act. Rather, figures were literally manufactured in Government Houses or collation centres as results for the return of President Obasanjo and the PDP to power. The alleged electoral malpractices of the ruling PDP were regarded as the most sophisticated in the electoral history of Nigeria. Further to the massive rigging were pockets of violence in different parts of Nigeria. A number of people have argued that there were no elections in 2003, but merely the intimidation of voters and the selection of already decided winners by elites and caucuses. Both internal and external observers were unanimous on the unfairness of the competition in the electoral process which was said to have been manipulated by the so-called ruling party, Peoples’ Democratic Party. For example, according to the Human Right Watch’s report, between April and May 2003, about one hundred people were said to have been killed and many more injured during federal and state elections in Nigeria and that most of the violence was perpetrated by the ruling PDP and its supporters. Also, the Transition Monitoring Group (TMG), a coalition of over ninety Civil Society Groups, in its report on the 2003 general elections, passed a vote of no confidence on the elections. Some political parties and their candidates decided to challenge some of the results before the various Election Petition tribunals and have gone ahead to do so while others declared “mass action” to pressure a government without popular mandate to abdicate power. Most of them were however denied justice by a corrupt judicial system. It would be recalled that the 2007 general elections reeked off all manner of chicanery characterized by the brazen attempt to disenfranchise the electorate and announce fictitious results in areas where no elections took place, not to mention intimidation of the electorate by the police and military in many places, non-delivery of election materials, hijack of ballot boxes, thumb printing and even foot-printing of ballot papers, incarceration and humiliation of independent election observers, bribery of electoral officers in order for them to look elsewhere when atrocious acts of perfidy were being perpetrated by party agents which all resulted in a bogus series of elections which both foreign and local observers described as nothing less than a travesty. Contributing to the above, Marietu opines:

Prior to the elections, the political atmosphere was again very tense. Among other mind-boggling incidents, President Olusegun Obasanjo condescendingly declared that, for him and the PDP, the 2007 election was ‘*a do or die affair*’ Supporting the above, Ezirim and Mbah argue:

The political violence that erupted in all these elections progressively had high ethnic tones as there were ethnic insurgencies during the various elections, such that between June and August 2006, three gubernatorial candidates were assassinated. The run-up to the April 2007 elections was violent, as campaigning in many areas was punctuated with political killings, bombings and armed clashes between supporters of rival political parties. The violence formed part of a broader pattern of violence and abuses that is inherent in Nigeria’s still largely unacceptable political system.

Without doubt, the 2007 elections was evidence that the cub of election rigging which was born in 1964 had now become a wild rampaging lion, consuming all it saw and leaving a shaking democracy in its wake. The process was characterized by unprecedented electoral malpractices which led to wide condemnation from local and international observers to the extent that upon inauguration, the then President, late Umaru Ya’Adua condemned the flawed election that brought him to power, thus, decided to set up a committee known as the

Electoral Reform Committee (ERC) headed by justice Mohammed Uwais to fashion out a transparent system that would ensure the conduct of credible elections and thereby deepen democracy in Nigeria. President Yar'Adua was ready to deliver his promises of the restoration of the rule of law and guarantee sanity in the electoral system before his death in 2009.

Nigeria's 2011 polls marked the fourth multiparty election in Nigeria. The 2011 general elections were generally acceptable by both local and foreign observers to be partially fair when compared with the 2003 and 2007 general elections which were conducted under the fourth republic. The election however witnessed some violence, the pre, during and post-election period. Akwa Ibom State witnessed one of the worst histories of political violence in March 22, 2011. An eye witness report on the matter indicate that many properties which included: 200 brand new Peugeot 307 cars; 500 brand new tricycles; the Goodluck/Sambo Campaign office which was burnt down by the rampaging mob; Fortune International High School owned by Senator Aloysius Etok which was razed down with school children in session and over 20 Toyota Hiace buses belonging to the PDP and Godswill 2011 Campaign Organization, nine Hilux jeeps belonging to the Government of Akwa Ibom State which were either completely destroyed or vandalized. Consequently, the Presidency set up a Presidential Committee of Inquiry to investigate the remote and immediate causes of the violence and recommend ways of averting future political violence in the State. This was aimed at seeking peaceful means of resolving the conflict. Further to the above, the release of 2011 Presidential election result by the Independence National Electoral Commission (INEC) which produced President Dr. Goodluck Jonathan of the PDP as the winner led to sectarian violence in some Northern parts of Nigeria. Some of the affected State were Bauchi, Yobe, Maiduguri, and Kaduna among others. The post electoral violence that accompanied the 2011 general election resulted in the killing of about ten Youth corps members in Bauchi State.

Theoretical Framework

In this research, we are adopting the conflict theory as our conceptual analysis in the context of the contemporary capitalist state, where the political class has created weak institutions in order to continue to control the resources of the State. To begin with, we locate our explanation in the theoretical writings of Prussian political economist and activist, Karl Marx (1818-1883). Conflict theory holds that social order is maintained by domination and power, rather than consensus and conformity. That is, those with wealth and power try to hold on to it by any means possible, chiefly by suppressing the poor and powerless. Conflict theory has been used to explain a wide range of social phenomena, including wars and revolutions, wealth and poverty, discrimination and domestic violence.

This theory is therefore very germane for our study because it juxtaposes electoral violence and political stability. It reveals that electoral violence in Nigeria is as a result of quest for political offices, which is predicated on primitive accumulation. It is important to note that the failure of the Nigerian leaders to establish good governance, forge national integration and promote what can be called real economic progress, through deliberate and articulated policies, have led to mass poverty and unemployment. This has resulted into communal, ethnic, religious, electoral and class conflicts that have now characterized the nation. These conflicts have great implications for political stability, as most often, State Security apparatus, especially, the men of the Nigeria Police Force were used by the ruling party to suppress and propagate their will. Resisting the above culminates to violence. Poverty and unemployment have therefore served as nursery bed for much violence in Nigeria, especially electoral violence, because unemployed persons are hired for little stipends for political

advantage of the rich. The country now has a reservoir of poor people who are determined to sell their conscience to the rich at the altar of making money through inglorious and fraudulent electoral malpractices. Elections and the acquisition of political power provide the key for carnage. Consequently, these poor Nigerians serve as mercenary fighters, kidnappers and electoral thugs to their wealthy masters. What this means theoretically is that poverty and quest for money increase the number of people who are prepared to kill or be killed for a given course at token benefit.

Method of Data Collection

This research has used the previous work conducted on the issue of election violence in different part of Nigeria to assess the gravity of the dangers attached to election violence towards providing poor leaders and illegitimate government that is not accountable and responsible for the people's in Nigeria.

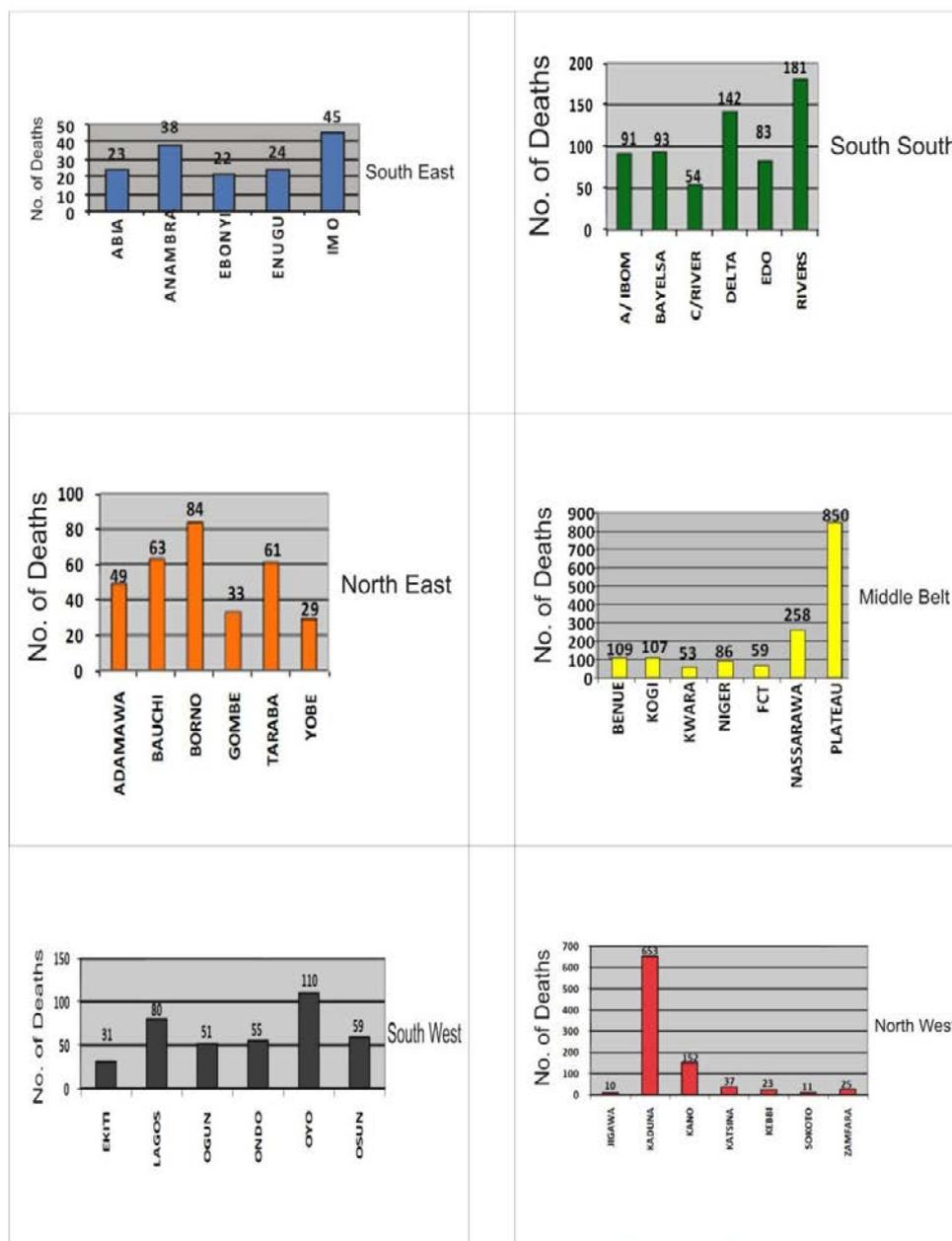
Table 1. Ranking of states from highest to lowest on prevalence of political/electoral fatalities (1999–2015)

Ranking	State	Number of Fatalities
1	Plateau	850
2	Kaduna	653
3	Nasarawa	258
4	Rivers	181
5	Kano	152
6	Delta	142
7	Oyo	110
8	Benue	109
9	Kogi	107
10	Bayelsa	93
11	Akwa Ibom	91
12	Niger	86
13	Borno	84
14	Edo	83
15	Lagos	80
16	Bauchi	63
17	Taraba	61
18	Fct	59
18	Osun	59
19	Ondo	55
20	Cross River	54
21	Kwara	53
22	Ogun	51
23	Adamawa	49
24	Imo	45
25	Anambra	38
26	Katsina	37
27	Gombe	33
28	Ekiti	31
29	Yobe	29

30	Zamfara	25
31	Enugu	24
32	Kebbi	23
32	Abia	23
33	Ebonyi	22
34	Sokoto	11
35	Jigawa	10
	Total	3,934

Kabiru Bello, IFRA, 2015.

FIGURE 1: NUMBER OF FATALITIES FROM ELECTORAL VIOLENCE PER STATE AND PER ZONE (JUNE 2006 - MAY 2014)



Source: Shamsudeen Kabir Bello- IFRA 2015

North-West Zone: Kaduna State

According to the Nigeria Watch database, Kaduna has the second-highest occurrence of election-related deaths in the country during the period under study. The state is believed to have an almost equal number of Muslim and Christian residents, and it has a history of crises largely attributed to tensions between the northern Hausa-Fulani Muslims and the southern Kaduna Christians. These clashes point to the relationship between ethno-religious conflicts and electoral violence where the latter is used as a pretext to carry out attacks between rival groups. In 2011, for instance, the results announced tagged the People's Democratic Party (PDP) as victor of both the Presidential and gubernatorial elections in the state. This sparked protests by supporters of the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) and its presidential candidate, Muhammadu Buhari. The demonstrations quickly transformed into religious fighting, with several churches, mosques, and homes burnt (see Table 2). On 1 June 2011, the Inspector General of Police, Alhaji Hafiz Ringim, disclosed that 518 persons, including six policemen, were killed in Kaduna State. The death toll of Human Rights Watch was even higher, with a total of 800 persons who died in post-election violence (HRW 2011: 8).

Event description	No. of deaths	Date	LGA*
Violence during the elections	4	14/4/2007	Kaduna North
Mayhem over elections, CPC vs. winning PDP killed at least 60 persons, the bodies being brought to Kaduna hospitals. Churches, mosques, and Fulani Muslims.	69	16/4/2011 to 19/4/2011	Jema'a
According to Human Rights Watch, 10 Christians were killed and 335 Muslims were recorded buried.	331	19/4/2011	Kachia
Pro Buhari members protested the results of the presidential elections. Two policemen, one lecturer, and four students were killed. Many houses, churches, and government properties were burnt. According to Vanguard, Dr. Ali Obge of the Department of Guidance and Counseling, Faculty of Education, Ahmadu Bello Zaria, was one the scores of academics and students killed.	17	17/4/2011	Zaria

* Local Government Area

Source: IFRA 2015; South-West Zone: Oyo State

Given the history of political crisis in the former Western Region, the South-West geopolitical zone is seen as prone to the use of thugs and criminals employed by godfathers to win elections. According to Human Rights Watch, for instance:

Chief Lamidi Adedibu has been involved in Oyo politics since the 1950s. His many detractors allege that he got his start as a small-time organizer of political thugs for the Action Group Party of Chief Obafemi Awolowo. By the late 1980s, however, he had emerged as a powerful political force through a combination of populist politics, patronage, violence and

extortion’’(Albin-Lackey 2007). Governor Rashidi Ladoja could not do without him when he was elected in 2003. Chief Adedibu called him “an ingrate” because he rebuffed several of his demands regarding public funds, appointments and projects in Oyo State. (Albin-Lackey, 2007).

The split between the two men resulted in the numerous clashes in the run-up to the 2007 elections, claiming several lives and property. The election eventually pronounced the godfather’s power in the state and saw the emergence of Chief Adedibu’s PDP candidate, Christopher Alao-Akala, against the incumbent. In this regard, the Nigeria Watch database confirms that political incidents recorded in Oyo State have links to hoodlums and, sometimes, Chief Lamidi Adedibu (see Table 3).

Table 3. Cases of godfathers and associated electoral violence in Oyo tate (1999–2015)

Event description	No. of deaths	Date	LGA*
Thugs went on the rampage, killing people, burning houses, and kidnapping several persons linked to the state governor, A. R.A. Ladoja. The violence was linked to a factional crisis within the NURTW. Loyal to Governor Ladoja, the factional chairman of NURTW, A. G. Abubakar, was detained at the home of L. Adedibu	5	24/5/2007	Saki East Saki West
50 political thugs attempted to attack the former Governor of Oyo State, Rashidi Ladoja. They were overpowered by security men; 3 gunmen died.	3	3/7/2007	All Ibadan LGAs
Hoodlums carrying a large banner of Alhaji Lamidi Adedibu, veteran politician and PDPchieftain, blocked Governor Christopher Adebayo Alao-Akala of Oyo State’s convoy on his way home from a Ceremony. They demanded their mobilization money as earlier agreed with the organizers of the ceremony and began	2	11/9/2007	Ibadan North

IFRA-Nigeria e-papers series, 2015			
Electoral Violence in Nigeria: Mapping, Evolution and Patterns (1999-2015)			
To throw stones when the governor refused PDP hoodlums stormed the rally of AC Senator Rashidi Ladoja, just after AP members attacked them. Two apprentices at the market died in the pandemonium and 22 were injured.	2	6/4/2011	All Ibadan LGAs

North-Central Zone (Middle Belt): Plateau State

According to the Nigeria Watch Third Report, which covered the period 2006–2011, Plateau was then the most dangerous state because of ethnic conflicts (Pérouse de Montclos 2011: 22) Tensions usually oppose Christian or Animist natives to settlers from the Hausa-speaking Muslim North vying for control of fertile farmlands. Electoral violence is thus linked to pre-existing ethno-religious conflicts, as in Barkin Ladi and Riyom LGAs. The capital city of Plateau State, in particular, has been very much affected by such tensions since the creation by the military regime of Jos North and Jos South from the old Jos LGA in 1991.

Figure 1 also shows that Plateau State has the highest number of deaths from political clashes. This is commensurate with the ethno-religious tensions that fuel electoral violence in the region. Aside from the insurgency in the North-Eastern region, Plateau State thus holds the record for being one of the most violent states in the country. According to the Nigeria Watch database, it also has the highest number of deaths for a single political incident related to elections, with 540 fatalities (see Table 4).

Table 4. Major electoral violence incidents in Plateau State (1999–2015)

Event description	No. of deaths	Date	LGA
Governorship spirant of ACD, J. Aruku, was murdered after a political rally.	2	2/6/2006	Jos North
Christians from the PDP were declared winners of the state elections but Muslims from the ANPP contested the results. A clash ensued, and homes, mosques, and churches were burnt. A Muslim charity said it collected more than 300 bodies; the Information Minister for Plateau Nuhu Gagara reported 200 dead. According to the Nigerian Red Cross, 10,000 people fled their homes and camped in various locations in the metropolis. On 30 November, Agence France Press reported that 381 bodies were placed in a mosque. On 1 December, a Muslim official at the main mosque, Murtala Sani Hashim, reported 367 bodies. Health officials reported at least 400 bodies. Other sources reported 500 buried in mass graves on 1 December. On 30 December, Agence France Press reported that the police carried out more than 90 summary executions in the course of suppressing violence Human	540	27/11/2008 to 29/11/2008	Jos East Jos North Jos South

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<p>Right Watch reported that at least 130 people were killed by policemen and soldiers. On 29 July it was reported that sectarian attacks in Jos claimed nearly 1,000 lives in total. Mercenaries were said to have been brought from neighbouring states (perhaps linked with Boko Haram). Muslim religious authorities in Jos registered between 469 and 632 dead amongst Hausa/Fulani and 23 amongst Catholics. The Stefanos Foundation named 103 Christians dead in Congo-Russia, Nasarawa, Rikkos, Sarki Mangu, and Tudun Wada. Ajibola Plateau State Judicial omission stated that 312 people were killed, including 118 Christian Ibo and 31 Yoruba. Hausa youths escorted by Special Task Force (STF) members for voter registration were attacked by Christian youths. One Hausa boy was killed. The STF gunned down one Christian boy while dispersing the mob. One electoral official was reportedly lynched and burned, and two soldiers were wounded.</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>17/1/2011</p>	<p>Jos North</p>
<p>At least one person was killed and three others injured in a pre-dawn attack. In the governorship election period, many actions by some politicians to pitch the Berom against Other ethnic nationalities were uncovered by the state government</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>22/4/2011</p>	<p>Riyom</p>

South-South Zone: Rivers State

The appearance of Rivers State in the zonal list points to the inherent battle to gain power and control over its abundant oil resources. The region is also seen to be very violent because of a high concentration of illegal arms. The Nigeria Watch database thus recorded multiple events where gunmen attacked political meetings. Most (77%) of the election-related violence reported in Rivers involved hoodlums, cultists, and other criminal groups with heavy arms (see Table 5).

Table 5. Major electoral violence incidents in Rivers State (2006–2014)

Event description	No. of deaths	Date	LGA
Rival cult groups, Deebam and Deewell, fought for two politicians, respectively Kenneth Kobani (State Commissioner for Finance) and Gabriel Pidomson (Member of the Rivers State House of Assembly), who were engaged in a 2007 elections battle with militias to control Bodo. Streets were deserted and schools were closed. Three more persons died on 29 July.	9	20/7/2006	Gokana
Two PDP members were shot dead in a gun battle during a PDP congress.	2	17/11/2006	Tai
Gunmen allegedly hired by PDP invaded Port-Harcourt, terrorizing many strategic areas, shooting into the crowd, into the air, or at guards in front of Governor Peter	4	24/5/2007	Port-Harcourt

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Odili. Helicopters flew over the city as police pursued the assailants. A bus conductor was shot in the head, and another in the rib near Abali Park. A woman selling plantain and a man were shot dead at the Fire Service and Water Line Junctions. A PDP member was shot dead by 8 gunmen who invaded the venue of a party meeting.	1	8/5/2011	Ikwerre
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North-East Zone: Bauchi State

Aside from Borno State—because of the dreaded attacks of Boko Haram—Bauchi State ranks high in terms of political violence in the North-East Zone. According to AOAV, Katagum, Bauchi, Misau, Danbam, and Alkaleri were the LGAs most heavily affected by the 2011 post-election violence (AOAV, 12 December 2013). But the list is even larger according to the Nigeria Watch database for the period covering 2006 to 2014. Giade, which does not appear on the AOAV’s list, is thus the second-most affected LGA in the state (Figure 2). The Nigeria Watch database also confirms the involvement of armed gangs of youths, exploited and sometimes financed by politicians or political groups.

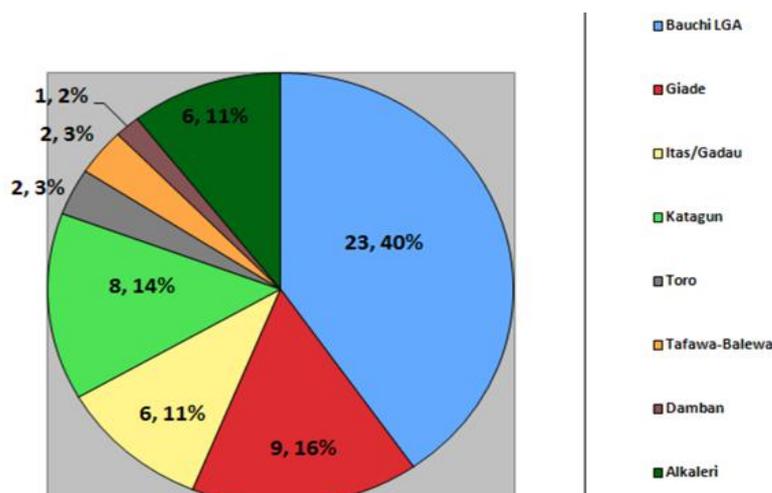


Figure 2. Number and percentage of deaths from electoral violence per Local Government Area, Bauchi State, cumulated figures (2006–2014)

Table 6. Major electoral violence incidents in Bauchi State (2006–2014)

Event description	No. of deaths	Date	LGA
Thugs killed a schoolteacher during rivalries between PDP Governorship candidate Alhaji Nadada Umar and his ANPP counterpart Malam Isa Yuguda	2	25/1/2007	Bauchi LGA
The convoy of the gubernatorial candidate of the ACN, Senator Baba Tela, was attacked by thugs sponsored by PDP stalwarts. Seven persons were injured.	1	19/3/2011	Gaide

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Event description	No. of deaths	Date	LGA
Aliyu S. Bello, a poly student of the Department of Technology, was killed by hired political thugs.	1	16/4/2011	Bauchi LGA
At least 32 Christians were killed by Hausa thugs, including 11 corps members. A total of 72 churches were burnt in the state over presidential elections results.	6	16/4/2011 to 17/4/2011	Katagun

South-East Zone: Imo State

This geopolitical zone recorded the lowest number of deaths related to electoral violence, with a total of 45 fatalities in 2006–2014 according to the Nigeria Watch database (Figure 3). Notwithstanding, Imo State incidents involve the use of ‘political thugs’ and point to the influence of godfathers.

Most of the cases reported had to do with kidnapping, assault, and group attacks (see Table).

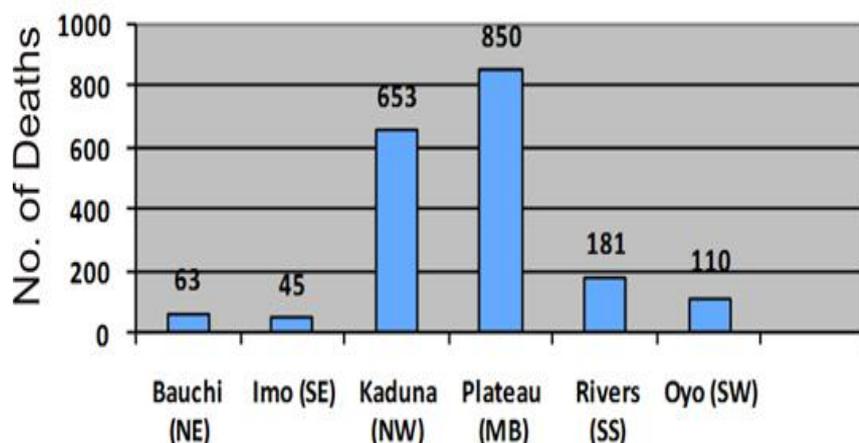


Figure 3. Number of deaths from electoral violence by highest occurrence per geopolitical zone (2006–2014)

Table 7. Major electoral violence incidents in Imo State (2006–2014)

Event description	No. of deaths	Date	LGA
Thugs attacked the electoral officer, who was saved by police. Five people were shot dead.	5	14/4/2007	Njaba
PDP thugs killed an INEC official and took away the ballot boxes.	1	14/4/2007	Ikeduru
House of Assembly aspirant, Marcus Ebeziem, escaped assassination, but gunmen killed his gateman.	1	30/10/2010	Ehime-Mbano
Gunmen stormed the place of Chairman of Nwangele LGA, Chief Chukwukere, killing him and five other persons. The Chairman had cash to distribute during elections.	6	8/4/2011	Nwangele

Discussion of Findings

We had earlier noted that electoral violence takes three major dimensions, namely, pre, during and post. Alemika opined, ‘Nigerian electoral process and governance system largely rest on the logic and practices of organized criminal enterprises. Organized crime entrepreneurs employ secrecy, cooptation, corruption and violence to promote and defend their interests and organizations. Nigerian political parties and politicians operate in very similar ways. Therefore, it is not surprising that violence, corruption and lack of transparency are embedded in the aims and strategies of Nigerian political parties and politicians. Events preceding the 2015 general elections are evident that the election may be a reminiscence of 2003. If Social Science actually mirrors the society, then, based on the empirical facts at our disposal, we can succinctly predict the outcome of various political actions, especially given past experiences. The ripple of 2015 general election falls within the realm of our analysis.

Ayodele Fayose, Governor of Ekiti State, South West Nigeria and a leading Member of the Ruling Peoples’ Democratic Party (PDP) shamefully boasted in a South West PDP meeting held in Akure Ondo State on 27th December, 2014 that the 2015 election ‘*will be a do or die*

affairs', this is a reminiscent of Chief Obasanjo's statement in 2003, and it evokes a spirit of desperation. Highlight of this is as captured as follows: "propaganda would only waste time and attack is the best form of defense, the party in general and South West PDP needed to be valiant to face the Tinubus anywhere they are ... we have control of the Police and the Army and I cannot afford to lose my control on Police and the Army" and without Jonathan being the president, we will lose the control .foremost pan-Yoruba socio-political group, Afenifere, led by Chief Reuben Fasoranti in a News Conference in Lagos said: 'We have in our hands, a country that appears to be preparing for a war but almost all are pretending that it is all build-up to the next elections. The saber-rattling going on amongst some major party and political actors are not healthy for the democratic project as most of the noise going on is not even about solving any of the major challenges confronting the country but power mongering.

The Niger Delta Militants rising from a meeting in the Government House of Bayelsa State said they are ready to go to war. One of the Militants, Asari Daukubo was quoted as saying "For every Goliath, God created a David. For every Pharaoh, there is a Moses. We are going to war. Everyone of you should go and fortify yourself,".

On Tuesday, 17th February, 2015, explosion and gunfire rocked by recalcitrant rented youths destabilized an election rally in Rivers State, killing one police officer and injuring four others while a reporter covering the event was stabbed.

The violence erupted at a Governorship party rally organized by All Progressives Congress (APC) for their candidate Dakuku Peterside in Okrika, the hometown of President Goodluck Jonathan's wife Patience. In a press conference that same day, Dakuku Peterside accused the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) as masterminding the attack. He further confirmed that over fifty persons were critically lying injured at Casely Harrison Specialist Hospital, Port Harcourt. This attack was beside other attacks on the party offices at Andoni, Omoku, Ogu, Okrika and their billboards across the State. The then Governor of Rivers State, Rotimi Amaechi filling an interview on Channel Television openly accused the wife of Mr. President Her Excellency Dame Patience Jonathan for the attack at Okrika.

Recently, a former Minister of External Affairs, Professor Bolaji Akinyemi, warned of a possible post-election crisis this year and the need to do everything possible to avert or minimize it. He states as follows: 'the certainty of violence after the 2015 elections is higher than it was in 2011. If President Jonathan wins, the North would erupt into violence as it did in 2011. If General Buhari wins, the Niger Delta will erupt into violence. I don't believe that we need rocket science to make this prediction. The violence of 2015 is going to be horrendous and worst than the one of 2011 for the simple reason that the illegal massive importation of weapons into the country has reached such alarming proportions that I really wonder which is better armed, the militias on one hand or the official Armed Forces on the other hand.

As part of United States' diplomatic attempt to sustained peace in Nigeria, the Secretary of State, John Kerry visited the Country. His visit was a pointer to the fact that the United States of America was watching all preparations for the election with keen interest. His visit also reminds Nigerians that the election must be keenly contested. During his visit, Kerry reiterated that in the interest of peace and fair play, the election must be conducted and not postponed. He equally met with the two front- line Presidential Candidates, namely, Dr. Jonathan and Alhaji Buhari.

In order to prevent the mayhem and catastrophe that may be expected as post-election violence, all the Presidential aspirants signed a peace accord for none violence pool in Abuja. The US Ambassador to Nigeria held similar meetings and signed Memorandum of Understanding for a peaceful pool with frontline Governorship Candidates in some States of the Federation.

Finally, very worrisome was the sudden shift of election dates by the electoral umpire, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). Muhammadu Buhari, APC presidential candidate in an interview with journalists on Monday in Abuja during a courtesy call on him by the first elected President of Malawi and Leader of the Commonwealth Election Observers Group, Dr. Bakili Muluzi sounded the warning that further shift in the rescheduled March 28 election will lead to “a civilian and military coup”.

Also contributing to the above, a former Governor of Ekiti State, Fayemi states, “To me, this is more of a civilian coup against democracy because for military to have said that it cannot provide security for INEC to prosecute the election implies that it is hands in gloves with the presidency. This is a travesty and a danger to our democracy. Also disturbing were series of litigations in court; a disqualification of any of the frontline presidential candidate would have led to an unprecedented pre – election violence that was capable of tearing the nation apart.

In all, the journey to 2015 general election was rough, many politicians were assassinated and others kidnapped. Campaign offices and cars of perceived opponents were burnt, while some campaign convoy were stoned including that of President Goodluck Jonathan in Bauchi, Katsina, among others.

Conclusion

Electoral violence generally refers to violence that is directly or indirectly connected to protest against an election. Nigeria’s post-independence history is replete with accounts of incidents of electoral violence. In the contemporary world, elections have become the most accepted means of changing the government. Although history has shown that, it is usually difficult to hold elections that are completely free and fair. Consequently, we argued that elections, which in other climes are processes that bring about peaceful change of government, have not been conducted in Nigeria according to international best practices governing their conduct. We analyzed the historical trajectory of elections in Nigeria, electoral violence in Nigeria’s 4th republic, 1999 – 2015, electoral violence and political instability, prognosis of 2015 general election and prospects for political stability. Finally, we made far reaching recommendation which amongst others includes the establishment of Election Offences Tribunals to try those who flout the Electoral Law by committing offences such as rigging, falsification of documents and election results, thugery, etc. It is our hope that our suggestions if adhered to would set the stage for the conduct of violence-free elections which would engender political stability and place Nigeria in the echelon of powerful democracies in the world.

Recommendations

In order to salvage the nation from collapsing into precipice and engender political stability, we recommend the following:

a) Full autonomy for the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). This autonomy would engender administrative efficiency and professionalism of the Body. Also, the appointment of INEC Chairman should be person of higher integrity who has a record of reputable public service.

- b) Respect for rule of law. The establishment of Election Offences Commission as suggested by the Justice Uwais Committee to try those who flout the Electoral Law by committing offences such as rigging, falsification of documents and election results, thuggery, etc be implemented.
- c) Implementation of the report of the National Constitutional Conference, 2014.
- d) Setting up of alternative dispute resolution mechanism.
- e) Job creation for the army of unemployed in the State.
- f) Mass reorientation/education of the citizens by the National Orientation Agency, Political Parties, Civil Society Organizations and the Mass Media on the dangers of electoral violence and possible punishments for offenders.
- g) Making political offices as part - time and less attractive.
- h) Institutional strengthening of all agencies related to the elections, especially, the Nigerian Police Force to be discipline, combat ready, equipped and corruption free.
- i) Strengthening of the Judiciary to be fully independent, transparent and incorruptible. To this end, we recommend that National Judicial Commission (NJC) should be restructured and better equipped to Exercise punitive measures against corrupt Judicial Officers that that pervade justice at the Electoral Tribunals, Appeal and Supreme Courts.
- j) Enhanced electoral monitoring by election monitoring groups, are essential for the institutionalization of effective electoral administration for democratic consolidation.

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